



## YOUNG PERFORMER FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

First Stage (FS) is a professional theatre company. Theatre, like school, has rules and customs followed by the people who work there. As a performer in a FS production, you will learn about those rules and customs and be expected to follow them as the adult professionals do. This packet will answer questions you may have about participating in the production. If you have questions that are not answered in this packet or you do not understand the answers, please ask your Stage Manager.

### BEFORE REHEARSALS BEGIN

**1. *If I have schedule conflicts, whom should I talk to? When?***

You should contact the Production Stage Manager, Kelly Schwartz, until your Stage Management staff is on contract. Their email is [kschwartz@firststage.org](mailto:kschwartz@firststage.org). They will work with the director to work through any scheduling conflicts. The sooner you notify us the better. Once all the conflicts are discussed with your Director, you will be notified as soon as possible if the conflict is **approved**. All conflicts need to be communicated by the Informational Meeting. Conflicts communicated after the Informational Meeting may not be accommodated.

**2. *Can I get my hair cut after I am cast?***

No. Please do not change anything about your appearance without clearing it with your Stage Manager and/or the Costume Shop Manager.

**3. *If I have transportation problems, what should I do?***

If you have problems of this nature, please talk to your Stage Manager. Young performers' families often arrange carpools. You and your family sign an agreement stating that you will get to rehearsal and performance calls on time, but if you need help keeping that agreement, FS can try and help.

**4. *How does missing school for the production work?***

Most rehearsals are scheduled after school and on the weekend and will not require you to miss school. You will need to miss some school once we move to the theatre for tech rehearsals (during the week before opening) and for performances. The Intern Permission Form, which needs to be signed by you, your parent(s)/guardian(s), and your principal, outlines the time period during which you will miss some school and states that you must make up all your schoolwork.



5. *Do I need to have a photo and bio?*

FS will contact you about a bio through the Marketing Department. It is important to get your bio in as soon as possible to ensure that it is in the playbill. The Young Performers in a mainstage production will have a headshot taken for the playbill. These headshots will take place at the MYAC during the first week of rehearsal and are taken by our Company Photographer. Notification will be sent out concerning these photos during the first week of rehearsal.

6. *Under what circumstances can I be removed from a show?*

Being cast in a production is a serious undertaking. Being removed from a production is equally serious and is considered if a severe problem arises that FS feels jeopardizes the production. Behavior that could result in your removal includes but is not limited to failure to abide by rules established by your Director and Stage Manager, excessive tardiness or absence without prior permission, a consistent failure to perform your role to the best of your ability, damage to FS, MYAC or Marcus Center property, harassment of another performer, fighting, stealing, or drug or alcohol use.

## DURING REHEARSAL

1. *Who's who and what are their jobs?*

You will meet a lot of people during rehearsal.

- The **Artistic Director** is in charge of the artistic decision-making at First Stage. They may also be the Director.
- The **Managing Director** is in charge of the business aspects of First Stage.
- The **Associate Artistic Director** has two areas of responsibility. As Associate Artistic Director, they assist the Artistic Director in artistic decision-making. They also hold the responsibility of a Company Manager. A Company Manager coordinates adult and young performer casting with the Artistic Director. They may also be your Director.
- The **Director of Production** is responsible for overseeing all technical aspects of the production. They supervise the Costume Shop, the Scene Shop, the Prop Shop, and the Crew at the theatre.
- The **Production Stage Manager** is responsible for overseeing all of the stage management staff. They are the person who is the key communicator with young performers and their families and who you maybe in contact with until your SM team arrives on contract.
- The **Costume Shop Manager** is in charge of the costume shop where all the costumes are created. They will schedule your measurement appointment and your first fitting, which will happen in the costume shop.
- The **Technical Director** is in charge of the Scene Shop and oversees the building of all the sets.



- The **Properties Master** is in charge of the Prop Shop and is responsible for building or purchasing all the props.
- The **Marketing Director** supervises the department that creates the advertising and publicity materials for FS and sells shows and events produced by FS.
- The **Patron Services Manager** is in charge of the Box Office and oversees ticket sales.
- The **School Group Coordinator** works in the Box Office and coordinates ticket sales to school groups.
- The **Education Director** is in charge of the Education programs that FS brings into schools.
- The **Academy Director** is in charge of the classes and programs that First Stage hosts at MYAC, Sharon Lynne Wilson Center, and Oak Creek.

These are the three people you will have the most contact with during rehearsal.

- The **Director** is in charge of making artistic choices for the entire production and is the person who will be helping the actors create the story during rehearsal.
- The **Stage Manager** is the center of communication for the production. They keep track of the artistic decisions made by the Director and communicate to the shops when those choices impact technical elements. They create the rehearsal schedule with the Director. When we move to the theater, they are in charge of the tech rehearsals. And once the play opens and the Director leaves, the Stage Manager is in charge of maintaining the production. Once rehearsal begins, the Stage Manager is your primary contact person.
- The **Assistant Stage Manager** assists the Stage Manager with all of their responsibilities and is the person responsible for supervising the pick-up of all Young Performers at the end of each rehearsal or performance day.

## 2. *May I take notes in my script?*

Absolutely. You will be expected to take as many notes as you need to recreate the blocking and choices made in rehearsal. There will be opportunities to write down notes during rehearsal. You can check your blocking with the Stage Manager or Assistant Stage Manager after each rehearsal.

## 3. *May I eat or drink during rehearsal?*

Food and drink are NOT allowed in the rehearsal room. You may have water in the rehearsal room. You may eat and drink in the commons on your breaks. There is a vending machine, refrigerator and microwave available to use. During weeknight rehearsal (after school), you will be given a break long enough to sit down and eat dinner. However, during weekend rehearsal you will not be given a long break – be sure to eat before you come to rehearsal.



**4. *When we are not working on my scene, what should I do?***

You can run lines with someone, work on your homework, or read quietly. Please do not horse around or disturb the rehearsal in progress. You will be expected to take initiative and use the time constructively.

**5. *If I have ideas about scenes (mine or others) whom should I tell?***

Directors love actors that come into rehearsal with ideas about scenes they are in. Creating a play is collaborative work where many people contribute. When you are rehearsing a scene and have an idea about it tell the Director. If you have an idea about a scene that you are not in, you may approach the Director with it, but please do this on a break and not in the middle of the rehearsal. Remember that the Director is in charge of the production and may have a good reason not to use your idea. Do not take it personally and do not be discouraged from presenting more ideas.

**6. *Should I arrive exactly at my call time or before?***

You should arrive with enough time to put down your things, change clothes or shoes, if necessary, and take a few minutes to think about the scenes that you will be working on so that you are ready to begin working at your call time. If you arrive at call time, you will be hurrying to get ready and settled in to work.

**7. *What should I do if I'm sick?***

As soon as you know that you are ill, you should notify your Stage Manager who will help you decide whether it is best for you to come to rehearsal and do your best or if it is better for you to stay home and rest. The Stage Manager will coordinate any adjustments that need to be made to the schedule, which may involve calling in your counterpart. Therefore, the sooner you tell your Stage Manager the better.

**8. *What happens if I get hurt in rehearsal?***

If you get hurt in rehearsal, the first thing you should do is tell your Stage Manager or Assistant Stage Manager immediately. There is a first aid kit and ice packs in the rehearsal room for minor injuries. If your injury is serious, your Stage Manager will call your parent(s) and/or emergency medical services to get you the medical attention you need. Your health and safety are absolutely the most important thing about being in a play.

**9. *What will happen at my measurement appointment?***

The Costume Shop Manager will get accurate sizes for your clothes and shoes so that they can build or purchase your costume. The Costume Shop Manager will schedule this 10-minute appointment with you several weeks before rehearsal begins.



**10. *What is a costume fitting?***

You will have two or three costume fittings. One will be after your measurement appointment but before rehearsal begins and will be scheduled by the Costume Shop Manager. The second (and sometimes third) will be during the rehearsal period and will be schedule by your Stage Manager. At these appointments, you will try on your costume to make sure that it fits properly. You do not need to bring anything special to your fitting.

Fittings are often scheduled very tightly as the Costume Designer is usually available for a limited time. Therefore, it is very important to arrive on time. If you are running late, please call the Costume Shop to let them know. Fittings occasionally need to be scheduled on a non-rehearsal day depending on the size of the cast and the time needed.

**11. *What should I bring to rehearsal?***

You should bring the following things to rehearsal: your script, a pencil, a water bottle, homework, a quiet reading book and dinner or a snack. All Young Performers are required to bring a quiet activities to keep occupied when not working in rehearsal.

**12. *What should I wear to rehearsal?***

You should wear comfortable clothes that allow you to move and shoes that are secured firmly to your feet. Sneakers are preferred. Boots, sandals, slip-ons and flip-flops are not allowed. You should pull your hair back away from your face and remove hats and dangling jewelry.

**13. *How will I know what will be happening in rehearsal and costume fittings each day?***

At the end of each rehearsal day, Stage Management will put together a daily schedule for the next rehearsal with the director. It will be emailed out to the cast and families. This schedule will tell you the time of your rehearsal or costume fitting, as well as, what will be worked on in rehearsal. This allows you to prepare for the rehearsal.

**14. *Why are there two casts of Young Performers?***

There are two casts of Young Performers to minimize the amount of school each Young Performer must miss. You will have a counterpart with whom you share a role. Each counterpart is responsible for talking with the other each day to communicate any notes or changes that happened in rehearsal.



## DURING TECH REHEARSALS

### 1. *Who's who and what are their jobs?*

You will meet a lot of people during tech rehearsal. Many of them have been working on their components of the show as long as or longer than you were in rehearsal. They are as much a part of our show as the people who have been in the rehearsal room.

- The **Master Electrician** runs the lights and special effects during the show. They also maintain the props and set.
- The **Sound Engineer** runs the sound during the show. They also maintain the props and set.
- The **Wardrobe Supervisor** is responsible for the costumes during the run of the show. They will help you with dressing before the performance and with quick changes during the performance. They also launder the costumes and repair any damaged pieces.
- The **Wardrobe Assistant** helps the Wardrobe Supervisor maintain and run the costumes during the show.
- The **Costume Designer** is responsible for choosing the costumes for the production. They may have been present at your costume fittings.
- The **Scenic Designer** is responsible for designing the set and choosing the props for the show.
- The **Lighting Designer** is responsible for lighting the show.
- The **Sound Designer** is responsible for the sounds and the music that play during the show.

### 2. *What happens during tech rehearsal?*

Tech rehearsals are used to put all the technical elements of the show together. We will work with actual costumes, real props and lights and sound on the stage in the theatre. Being on stage will require a big adjustment. Sometimes changes are made to what we have done in the rehearsal room. The priorities of the tech rehearsals are safety, technical elements and blocking adjustments. We will not focus on acting until we have gotten through all the technical elements.

### 3. *What and where is the sign-in sheet?*

The sign-in sheet is the tool your Stage Manager uses to keep track of who has arrived at the theatre for tech rehearsal or performance. The sign-in sheet is located on the Call Board backstage. Please sign in as soon as you arrive. Never sign in for anyone else or have someone sign in for you.

### 4. *What is a "hold" and what should I do during one?*

During tech rehearsal, the Stage Manager will frequently say "hold." When you hear "hold," you should stop the scene and hold your position. During the hold, the Designers and Crew will make adjustments to the technical components. They work quickly to incorporate their elements in only a few rehearsals. So while you may relax in your position during the hold, your patience



and quiet attention will help the Designers and Crew get their work done. Please listen for instructions from your Stage Manager about changes that were made and where and when to resume the scene.

**5. *Is it OK to leave the stage during a hold?***

The only time you should leave the stage is if a break is called or you are blocked to exit. If we are in a hold, please maintain your general position. If you have an emergency that requires you to leave the stage during a hold, ask your Stage Manager or Assistant Stage Manager for permission.

**6. *Am I responsible for my own props or costumes?***

All props and costumes you will need will be provided by the theatre's shops. You are responsible for hanging up your costume and straightening up your dressing room before you leave at the end of the tech rehearsal or performance day. You are responsible for returning any props you use during tech rehearsal or performance to a prop table backstage.

**7. *Do I have to wear make-up? Will someone show me how to apply it?***

Young Performers do not need to wear make-up for performance. If you typically wear make-up in your daily life and are uncomfortable without it, please speak to your Costume Shop Manager about a natural application of make-up that you may wear during the performance. If any specialty make-up is required for a production, FS will provide the make-up and instruction and/or assistance with the application of it.

**8. *Can I watch scenes that I am not in?***

Your Stage Manager will make this decision. Typically, if you can get to and from the house without creating a disruption and without missing an entrance or a backstage duty, you may sit in the audience and watch the parts of the play that you are not in. Once we begin running the show, you will not be allowed into the house to watch the show.

**9. *Do I set my own props and costumes?***

The Crew and the Assistant Stage Manager will set all props before each performance. You should always check the props you use before the performance to be sure they are ready for you. Do not touch props that are not yours. They may have already been set and checked. The Wardrobe staff will preset any costumes that are needed backstage or onstage.

**10. *If there is a problem, should I ask to stop?***

Tech rehearsals are the time to work out problems. If you see a problem and don't know how to solve it, ask to stop. To stop, in a loud, clear voice say "Hold please." If you ever feel unsafe on stage, you may ask to stop immediately.



### 11. *Can my family or friends watch tech rehearsal?*

No. Rehearsals are closed so that actors feel comfortable to explore, take risks and try new things. Guests in rehearsals inhibit that freedom. There may be a time when dress rehearsals are opened up to a few invited guests or designers. You will be notified of this event, if it occurs.

### 12. *What happens during notes sessions?*

A notes session is a chance, during the tech rehearsal and preview period, for the director to give instruction and feedback to the actors. It is important to pay attention and write down the notes given to you during the notes session. There is usually no time to actually rehearse the things discussed during notes. If you think you need to rehearse the adjustment, ask your Stage Manager.

## DURING PERFORMANCES

### 1. *Who's who and what are their jobs?*

The Director will leave and the Stage Manager is the person responsible for the entire production and will give you notes or rehearse scenes with you to maintain the show.

There are few more people who join the team once the show is in performance.

- The **House Manager** is in charge of the "front of house" which involves coordinating volunteer ushers and parents, running concessions, interacting with the ticket agent and taking care of the audience.
- The **Ushers** are the people who show the audience to their seats.

### 2. *Will the performance schedule change?*

It is very unusual to change the performance schedule. There are occasionally instances in which a performance may be added or cancelled and are listed on the calendar as TBA. The only person with the authority to communicate schedule changes is your Stage Manager.

### 3. *Can I switch performances with my counterpart?*

Pre-arranged switches are acceptable. Counterparts often switch to accommodate other obligations like exams, band/choir/orchestra concerts, and athletic events or to perform for their own schools. These switches must be negotiated between the counterparts' families and communicated to your Stage Manager in writing.

In the case of an emergency or an illness, your counterpart may be called in to perform. You may not have the opportunity to make-up that performance. Your Stage Manager is the person who will make the final decision in this situation.



**4. *Should I arrive at or before my call time?***

You should arrive before your call, just like during rehearsal, giving yourself enough time to sign in, drop your things off in the green room, greet your friends and get ready for warm-ups. The hour before the performance begins is the time for you to get warmed up, get notes and work things with your Stage Manager and get dressed for the performance. If you are running late, you should call your Stage Manager so that they know where you are so that they do not call in your counterpart.

**5. *What do I do when I arrive?***

The first thing you should do when you arrive is **sign in** so that your Stage Manager knows that you are here. After that, go down to the green room and wait for your Stage Manager to come down to begin warm-ups. Once you are signed in, **DO NOT** leave the theatre without asking your Stage Manager.

**6. *Are warm-ups mandatory?***

Yes. Warm-ups are mandatory for all Young Performers. You will sometimes have as many as four days between performances. The warm-ups help you check-in to the play again and prepare your body and mind for the performance. Warm-ups will be lead by your Stage Manager or a fellow Young Performer.

**7. *What do "half hour," "15 minutes," "5 minutes," and "places" mean?***

These are calls (announcements) that the Stage Manager makes to help the actors and crew know how close we are to the beginning of the show.

- **Half hour** is the time when all the actors and the crew are expected to be present at the theater and when the house usually opens and actors are not longer allowed on stage. It is also when your stage manager will announce that Your Performers can begin to get into costume.
- **15 minutes** is the time when the stage manager will make announcements like who is leading the talkback and if this is an intermission/non-intermission show.
- **5 minutes** is the time when 5 minutes remain until the beginning of the show. This is a good time to make one last visit to the restroom.
- **Places** are when there are 2 minutes to the beginning of the show. As soon as you hear the places call, you should report to your starting position backstage and remain there. The Assistant Stage Manager checks that everyone is in place and gives the Stage Manager the cue that we are ready to begin.

The appropriate response to each call is "Thank you" followed by the call, for example "Thank you 15 minutes." This response lets the Stage Manager know that you heard the call and that you are on schedule with your preparation. If, for some reason you feel that you will not be ready



in time, let your Stage Manager know immediately. They can get you the help that you need to solve your problem. Once 5 minutes is called, there is not a lot of time to solve problems, so as soon as you know you have a problem, ask for help.

**8. *What should I do between my scenes?***

Depending on how long you have between scenes, you may be in several different locations. If the time between your scenes is very short, you should wait quietly backstage. If you have more time in between scenes, you should wait in your dressing room or the green room. While waiting in the dressing room or green room, you should work on your homework or a quiet activity. While waiting, you must also continue to listen to the play on the monitors so that you are ready for your next entrance. No one will come to get you for your entrance. You are not allowed in the house during a performance.

**9. *While I am in the dressing room or green room, how will I know what is happening on stage?***

There are monitors (speakers) in the dressing rooms and green room that allow you to hear what is happening on stage. If you can't hear the monitor, either the volume is turned down or there is too much noise in the room. You can ask any one of the crew to help you adjust the volume on the monitor. You can help your fellow actors and remind them to keep the appropriate backstage speaking volume.

**10. *What if the audience is distracting?***

Occasionally, the audience will be disruptive. Remember that we train not only young actors but also young audiences. You should do your best to ignore any distraction and continue to perform to the best of your ability. Often, if you continue to focus on your performance, you help the audience re-focus their attention. You should also tell your Assistant Stage Manager who will tell the Stage Manager. The Stage Manager and the House Manager can address continued disruptive behavior.

**11. *Will we ever stop a show in the middle?***

If someone in the audience is being so disruptive that no one is able to pay attention to the play or if the actors are in danger (for example, if things are being thrown at the stage), the Stage Manager will stop the show. Or if there are technical difficulties with lights, sound or scenic elements. The Stage Manager will communicate with the House Manager about needing to stop the show. When both are ready, the Stage Manager will bring the house lights up and the House Manager will step to bottom of one of the aisle and announce that show is being stopped. That is the cue for the actors to stop and take the nearest exit. The House Manager will address the disruption and communicate with the Stage Manager once the problem is resolved. The Stage Manager will decide where to resume the play and will cue the actors and crew to begin again. There are some cases in which the Stage Manager will make an announcement over the sound



system. Please listen to instructions so you know what needs to happen. This is only done in extreme cases.

**12. *If I see someone I don't recognize backstage, what should I do?***

You should tell your Assistant Stage Manager or any other adult (cast or crew) in the play right away. There are many organizations in the Marcus Center where we perform. Sometimes, a person who works in another part of the building comes through our space. However, during the performance, only people involved with our play should be backstage.

**13. *Why do we have talkbacks and how do they work?***

We have talkbacks because we are a teaching theatre. Talkbacks allow the audience to ask questions about what they have just seen and what is involved creating the production. A talkback follows every performance, lasts 5 minutes and is a continuation of the performance. It is led by an adult actor or an older young performer who will take a question from the audience, repeat it, and call on a cast member to answer the question. If you answer a question, stand up, speak loudly and include the entire audience. Honor all questions asked genuinely - there are no silly questions. The Stage Manager will regulate the length of the talkback.

**14. *On 2-shows days, what should I do between shows?***

Between shows, you will have 30-45 minutes during which you can eat your lunch. There is a little more time between shows on a weekend performances than on a school days. You must wear a cover-up (provided by wardrobe) while eating lunch to protect your costume.

**15. *May I have guests backstage?***

No. The best place to meet your guests is at the Stage Door. No one, other than cast and crew, should be backstage prior or following a performance.

**16. *May my parents take pictures?***

No, First Stage's hires a professional photographer to take photos of each cast during dress runs at our closed tech rehearsals. These photos are available for sale from the photographer. No other photography is allowed in the theater.

**17. *May my parents videotape a performance?***

No. There is absolutely no videotaping allowed.

**18. *May I visit with family/friends in between shows?***

No. In between shows is a busy time for the crew. There is no time to escort/monitor young performers who wish to visit with family/friends in the lobby or at the stage door. It is important for the young performers to focus on eating/resting up for the second show of the day. The break is also a great bonding opportunity for the young performers.